

RHODA ROLAND.

A Woman from the West in Washington.

The True Story of a Lady Stenographer in Search of a Situation.

By H. S. SUTTON.

PARTICIPANTS.

RHODA ROLAND—"All roads lead to Rome"—and office.
M. B. PLEASANTON, one of the Magnates of Silk Stocking Row.
ORRIN STIVERS, Rhoda's married friend, ready to assist in a good cause.
TOM BAXTER, bred in "Bohemia" and never got out of it.
MRS. EDENWORTH, room-mate of Rhoda.
JUDGE BARNSTABLE, M. C., "twist devil" and the deep sea.

CHAPTER IX—Continued.

THE GROUP OF SIX.

Mr. Ellenworth and I resumed conversation.
"And your State is?" asked I.
"Georgia," she responded. "A generation ago we had Bill Arp and Sut. Lovinsgood. To-day Joel Chandler Harris ('Uncle Remus'), Bridges W. Smith, Frank L. Stanton and Smith Clayton sing the songs, and you know that aphorism, 'Let me write the songs, I care not who makes the laws.' It is in the sunny Southland that the inspiration is sought for the song. No less than four familiar Southern airs will live until time shall take its flight into eternity. These are 'Maryland, My Maryland,' 'My Old Kentucky Home,' 'Way Down on the Suwanee River,' and 'Dixie.'"
"Yes, I fancy a band unable to produce these would be forced to go out of business."

We retired early. Suddenly I was awakened by what appeared to be a voice calling "Violetta!" I started up in bed, saw Ada standing at the door of our hat closet, and sank back relieved.

"I couldn't hear you, Olga," she said. "I had my head up in the closet."

"I said I had a tip that Dennie had started after Violetta," said Olga, from the next room.

"Something mysterious about that Violetta business. I believe Mrs. Roland knows more than she cares to tell."

"She'll hear you if you don't watch out."

"Oh, she's sound asleep. I stood right by her bed while I took off my hat, and fell over a chair just as you called to me, and she never moved. Everybody was at Alma's but you. I had one of the best times. Where did you disappear all of a sudden?"

"I met Nat right there by the drug store. He left on the 10:20 for Aspen, Colorado. Nominating would do but I must go to the depot. And we set there and held each other's hands, like two fools, both half crying. He's gone out there, the other side of the Rocky Mountains, where the water runs the other way, to make his fortune. Maybe he'll send for me. We promised to write."

"You should have come up after the train left. Vivia was secretary. She brought a lap full of constitutions and by-laws of various organizations. Alma presided."

"Before you go any further, let me step in the next room and see if those two women are asleep," said Olga.

"She came in the room, standing the door wide open, and entered. She walked around the room, finding Mrs. Edenworth breathing heavily and in dreamland. She paused at my bedside and would have made affidavit I was inhabiting the same territory."

"Shut the door and they won't hear us," suggested Ada.

"No, it's too hot. I'll leave it ajar. You couldn't wake either of them with a cannon."

"We can't be too careful. We decided, first, no member should allow any of four classes to wait on her."

"And they were?"

"The bill poster, the hack driver, the bar-tender and the saloon-keeper were all barred. Vivia showed us where a number of organizations refused to admit male collectors. We started to include collectors, but some one said collectors stood a chance of promotion. After the chair—that's Alma—had been selected as a committee of one to draw up a set of regulations based on our action, she gave out the passport."

"What is it?"

"You think it would be all right to give it to you?"

"Why, certainly. I'm one of the six. You adopted that name—Group of Six—didn't you?"

"Alma told us never to write it. When we gave it to anybody to make them repeat it after us, but never to put it in paper. It goes like this: 'The visitor says to Alma, when she answers the bell, 'I come to collect the insurance.' 'What insurance?' she interrogates. 'The safety insurance,' is the reply. 'For whom?' Then the gentleman gives the name of the member giving him the passport and the one he desires to meet.'"

"I can remember that all right," said Olga, repeating it.

CHAPTER X.

A LETTER FROM SAT.

I arrived at my office in the Corcoran Building—I call it my office because I carry the key—early. Mr. Whitney soon put in an appearance.

"You got away yesterday afternoon just in time to miss the raid," said he, after a cherry good morning.

"Raid!" I responded, wondering what sort of a place I had stumbled into this time.

"Yes; you can call it nothing else. A regular deluge of applicants in answer to the Star ad. I can't understand how you managed to get so far ahead of the pack."

nle was so strong he actually held me on the machine, but I couldn't keep my feet on the stirrups—pedals, he called them. After the hardest hour's work of my life, I could navigate alone about 15 feet.

"Now, want to teach you how to get off," said Dennie.

"Hadden't I better learn how to get on first?"

"Oh, you can stand it up by the curb and do that easily. Jimmie Michael, the crack rider, says any fool can climb on. It takes an artist to get off—successfully, that's the word."

I told my tutor I thought one more lesson would make me proficient, and we trundled the wheel back to the house. We were at a loss where to stable it.

"I'll fix it," said Dennie. "I'll drive a large nail up behind the front door; you can wrap it with cloth and hang the wheel there."

"You think that it will be safe?"

"How's anybody going to steal it when they don't know it's there?"

On Sunday afternoon, 6 o'clock found me at the dining room. Mr. Stivers soon entered alone.

"I had to put it off until next Sunday. She promised then she'd go. How about that evening I was to have in your society?" he added.

"Suppose we call it the Friday following," said I. "And if you don't have your wife here next Sunday I never will trust another man as long as I live."

Times flies fast when one is at work. Mrs. Edenworth pounded away on the typewriter every night, refusing my proffers of assistance.

"Up the State!" I repeated.

"Yes. Paw says it's always best to hail from up the State. Tom's from up the State somewhere."

"May I ask, who is Tom?"

"Don't you know? Why, Tom Platt, to be sure. And paw is a personal friend of Tom's. Course he hasn't done anything for paw just yet. But, then, paw's working, and the boys, they're in the dump."

"In the what?"

"That's our name for the mail-bag repair shop. 'Taint much right now, but they'll catch on. I need a corset, a knit shawl, and two of these thin, whatyoucall-ems. Don't you think I could work here till I get 'em? Then I'll be fixed for the summer. Oh, my corn hurts!"

I told her there was nothing she could engage in at present, and as for corns, that is an affliction which is no respecter of persons.

"Well," she said, as she started out, "I'm don't land paw or me one in something good at the end of the fiscal year paw'll know the reason why. Paw said he'd just as soon it was me; you can guess the rest."

A strikingly handsome lady from the drillery came next, followed by two who stated they were from Wood's. Mrs. Spencer's business college also furnished an applicant. I dismissed them in turn. Mr. Whitney, after glancing in to see if the coast was clear, resumed the sorting of his mail.

"Suppose I had hired something like that from 'up the State,' or this, and the face of which was covered with the scrawl, 'If not received within five days return to —.' In pity I omit the name and address."

At the close of the day's labor, I started for the C street dining room. Mr. Stivers was in his accustomed seat. He was surprised at my entrance. More so when I took a vacant seat opposite.

"I did not expect to see you before Sunday night," he said. "I'll try and be here with my wife, but she'll be here with my intention," was my reply. "But I had so much to tell you I couldn't stay away. First I'm working, and I proceeded to tell him how I secured employment. Then I told him—and I reproach myself therefore—of the organization of the Group of Six, giving him the password. I was very careful, however, to give no names. Thinks I, he'll never be able to use it. Then I narrated the jewelry incident; how the proprietor thereof, taking me for his wife, wanted me to take a toilet set, paying for it some time over in the future."

His features lost their smile.

"Some years ago there originated in the brains of a Department clerk the ritual of an order that to-day has its lodges in every part of the habitable globe. It is impossible to find a hamlet where there is not brave men wearing the badge bearing the letters 'F. C. B.' It is a good thing. They have a social side and an insurance feature. They care for the widow and the orphan. I allude to the Knights of Pythias. Yet the man who will devise some scheme for killing the credit system in this city will be a greater benefactor to his fellowmen than Justus H. Rathbone."

"I am afraid I am unable to report material progress," was the reply. "However, Sunday next be here at 6 o'clock."

I said I would do so.

"Where does Alma live?" he asked. "I told him one of the girls said it was the only old house in the block."

Just as I left the table, a gentleman came past with, "Hello, Orrin, know anything worth telling?"

"No, I believe not, Baxter," was the reply.

I hastened back to the table.

"Was that gentleman's first name Tom, and is he a newspaper correspondent?" I inquired.

"Yes; why?"

"Then I want you to introduce me."

He could see I was in earnest, and nodded. Mr. Baxter was talking to the cashier as I handed in my check and the amount.

"I believe Mr. Stivers desires to speak to you moment," I said.

Mr. Stivers by this time had joined us and introduction followed in the open space in front of the cashier's desk.

"I am rooming with a lady who would make you an admirable press agent. She is continually sounding the praises of one Baxter," I began. Mr. Stivers, I could see, was wondering why I was so anxious for the introduction.

"She best not place the standard too high," was his reply. "I may not be able to come up to the requirements thereof."

After a few moment's conversation, the gentlemen walked off together. Mr. Baxter saying:

"I trust we will meet again. I come pretty near being a regular here."

Dennie was in the parlor when I got home.

"Suppose I raise \$40," said I. "do you think I could get a bicycle?"

"You could get one if you had \$5. You can get anything on installments in this man's town, from a brown-stone front to a box of marbles."

In half an hour Dennie had selected a wheel in a Ninth street establishment. I had made a deposit thereon, and were en route to the Monument Lot to take our first lesson. Dennie was so strong he actually held me on the machine, but I couldn't keep my feet on the stirrups—pedals, he called them. After the hardest hour's work of my life, I could navigate alone about 15 feet.

"Now, want to teach you how to get off," said Dennie.

"Hadden't I better learn how to get on first?"

"Oh, you can stand it up by the curb and do that easily. Jimmie Michael, the crack rider, says any fool can climb on. It takes an artist to get off—successfully, that's the word."

I told my tutor I thought one more lesson would make me proficient, and we trundled the wheel back to the house. We were at a loss where to stable it.

"I'll fix it," said Dennie. "I'll drive a large nail up behind the front door; you can wrap it with cloth and hang the wheel there."

"You think that it will be safe?"

"How's anybody going to steal it when they don't know it's there?"

On Sunday afternoon, 6 o'clock found me at the dining room. Mr. Stivers soon entered alone.

"I had to put it off until next Sunday. She promised then she'd go. How about that evening I was to have in your society?" he added.

"Suppose we call it the Friday following," said I. "And if you don't have your wife here next Sunday I never will trust another man as long as I live."

Times flies fast when one is at work. Mrs. Edenworth pounded away on the typewriter every night, refusing my proffers of assistance.

"Up the State!" I repeated.

"Yes. Paw says it's always best to hail from up the State. Tom's from up the State somewhere."

"May I ask, who is Tom?"

"Don't you know? Why, Tom Platt, to be sure. And paw is a personal friend of Tom's. Course he hasn't done anything for paw just yet. But, then, paw's working, and the boys, they're in the dump."

"In the what?"

"That's our name for the mail-bag repair shop. 'Taint much right now, but they'll catch on. I need a corset, a knit shawl, and two of these thin, whatyoucall-ems. Don't you think I could work here till I get 'em? Then I'll be fixed for the summer. Oh, my corn hurts!"

I told her there was nothing she could engage in at present, and as for corns, that is an affliction which is no respecter of persons.

"Well," she said, as she started out, "I'm don't land paw or me one in something good at the end of the fiscal year paw'll know the reason why. Paw said he'd just as soon it was me; you can guess the rest."

A strikingly handsome lady from the drillery came next, followed by two who stated they were from Wood's. Mrs. Spencer's business college also furnished an applicant. I dismissed them in turn. Mr. Whitney, after glancing in to see if the coast was clear, resumed the sorting of his mail.

"Suppose I had hired something like that from 'up the State,' or this, and the face of which was covered with the scrawl, 'If not received within five days return to —.' In pity I omit the name and address."

At the close of the day's labor, I started for the C street dining room. Mr. Stivers was in his accustomed seat. He was surprised at my entrance. More so when I took a vacant seat opposite.

"I did not expect to see you before Sunday night," he said. "I'll try and be here with my wife, but she'll be here with my intention," was my reply. "But I had so much to tell you I couldn't stay away. First I'm working, and I proceeded to tell him how I secured employment. Then I told him—and I reproach myself therefore—of the organization of the Group of Six, giving him the password. I was very careful, however, to give no names. Thinks I, he'll never be able to use it. Then I narrated the jewelry incident; how the proprietor thereof, taking me for his wife, wanted me to take a toilet set, paying for it some time over in the future."

His features lost their smile.

"Some years ago there originated in the brains of a Department clerk the ritual of an order that to-day has its lodges in every part of the habitable globe. It is impossible to find a hamlet where there is not brave men wearing the badge bearing the letters 'F. C. B.' It is a good thing. They have a social side and an insurance feature. They care for the widow and the orphan. I allude to the Knights of Pythias. Yet the man who will devise some scheme for killing the credit system in this city will be a greater benefactor to his fellowmen than Justus H. Rathbone."

"I am afraid I am unable to report material progress," was the reply. "However, Sunday next be here at 6 o'clock."

I said I would do so.

"Where does Alma live?" he asked. "I told him one of the girls said it was the only old house in the block."

Just as I left the table, a gentleman came past with, "Hello, Orrin, know anything worth telling?"

"No, I believe not, Baxter," was the reply.

I hastened back to the table.

"Was that gentleman's first name Tom, and is he a newspaper correspondent?" I inquired.

"Yes; why?"

"Then I want you to introduce me."

He could see I was in earnest, and nodded. Mr. Baxter was talking to the cashier as I handed in my check and the amount.

"I believe Mr. Stivers desires to speak to you moment," I said.

Mr. Stivers by this time had joined us and introduction followed in the open space in front of the cashier's desk.

"I am rooming with a lady who would make you an admirable press agent. She is continually sounding the praises of one Baxter," I began. Mr. Stivers, I could see, was wondering why I was so anxious for the introduction.

"She best not place the standard too high," was his reply. "I may not be able to come up to the requirements thereof."

After a few moment's conversation, the gentlemen walked off together. Mr. Baxter saying:

"I trust we will meet again. I come pretty near being a regular here."

Dennie was in the parlor when I got home.

"Suppose I raise \$40," said I. "do you think I could get a bicycle?"

"You could get one if you had \$5. You can get anything on installments in this man's town, from a brown-stone front to a box of marbles."

In half an hour Dennie had selected a wheel in a Ninth street establishment. I had made a deposit thereon, and were en route to the Monument Lot to take our first lesson. Dennie was so strong he actually held me on the machine, but I couldn't keep my feet on the stirrups—pedals, he called them. After the hardest hour's work of my life, I could navigate alone about 15 feet.

"Now, want to teach you how to get off," said Dennie.

"Hadden't I better learn how to get on first?"

"Oh, you can stand it up by the curb and do that easily. Jimmie Michael, the crack rider, says any fool can climb on. It takes an artist to get off—successfully, that's the word."

I told my tutor I thought one more lesson would make me proficient, and we trundled the wheel back to the house. We were at a loss where to stable it.

"I'll fix it," said Dennie. "I'll drive a large nail up behind the front door; you can wrap it with cloth and hang the wheel there."

"You think that it will be safe?"

"How's anybody going to steal it when they don't know it's there?"

On Sunday afternoon, 6 o'clock found me at the dining room. Mr. Stivers soon entered alone.

"I had to put it off until next Sunday. She promised then she'd go. How about that evening I was to have in your society?" he added.

"Suppose we call it the Friday following," said I. "And if you don't have your wife here next Sunday I never will trust another man as long as I live."

Times flies fast when one is at work. Mrs. Edenworth pounded away on the typewriter every night, refusing my proffers of assistance.

"Up the State!" I repeated.

"Yes. Paw says it's always best to hail from up the State. Tom's from up the State somewhere."

"May I ask, who is Tom?"

"Don't you know? Why, Tom Platt, to be sure. And paw is a personal friend of Tom's. Course he hasn't done anything for paw just yet. But, then, paw's working, and the boys, they're in the dump."

"In the what?"

"That's our name for the mail-bag repair shop. 'Taint much right now, but they'll catch on. I need a corset, a knit shawl, and two of these thin, whatyoucall-ems. Don't you think I could work here till I get 'em? Then I'll be fixed for the summer. Oh, my corn hurts!"

I told her there was nothing she could engage in at present, and as for corns, that is an affliction which is no respecter of persons.

"Well," she said, as she started out, "I'm don't land paw or me one in something good at the end of the fiscal year paw'll know the reason why. Paw said he'd just as soon it was me; you can guess the rest."

A strikingly handsome lady from the drillery came next, followed by two who stated they were from Wood's. Mrs. Spencer's business college also furnished an applicant. I dismissed them in turn. Mr. Whitney, after glancing in to see if the coast was clear, resumed the sorting of his mail.

"Suppose I had hired something like that from 'up the State,' or this, and the face of which was covered with the scrawl, 'If not received within five days return to —.' In pity I omit the name and address."

At the close of the day's labor, I started for the C street dining room. Mr. Stivers was in his accustomed seat. He was surprised at my entrance. More so when I took a vacant seat opposite.

"I did not expect to see you before Sunday night," he said. "I'll try and be here with my wife, but she'll be here with my intention," was my reply. "But I had so much to tell you I couldn't stay away. First I'm working, and I proceeded to tell him how I secured employment. Then I told him—and I reproach myself therefore—of the organization of the Group of Six, giving him the password. I was very careful, however, to give no names. Thinks I, he'll never be able to use it. Then I narrated the jewelry incident; how the proprietor thereof, taking me for his wife, wanted me to take a toilet set, paying for it some time over in the future."

His features lost their smile.

"Some years ago there originated in the brains of a Department clerk the ritual of an order that to-day has its lodges in every part of the habitable globe. It is impossible to find a hamlet where there is not brave men wearing the badge bearing the letters 'F. C. B.' It is a good thing. They have a social side and an insurance feature. They care for the widow and the orphan. I allude to the Knights of Pythias. Yet the man who will devise some scheme for killing the credit system in this city will be a greater benefactor to his fellowmen than Justus H. Rathbone."

"I am afraid I am unable to report material progress," was the reply. "However, Sunday next be here at 6 o'clock."

I said I would do so.

"Where does Alma live?" he asked. "I told him one of the girls said it was the only old house in the block."

Just as I left the table, a gentleman came past with, "Hello, Orrin, know anything worth telling?"

"No, I believe not, Baxter," was the reply.

I hastened back to the table.

"Was that gentleman's first name Tom, and is he a newspaper correspondent?" I inquired.

"Yes; why?"

"Then I want you to introduce me."

He could see I was in earnest, and nodded. Mr. Baxter was talking to the cashier as I handed in my check and the amount.

"I believe Mr. Stivers desires to speak to you moment," I said.

Mr. Stivers by this time had joined us and introduction followed in the open space in front of the cashier's desk.

"I am rooming with a lady who would make you an admirable press agent. She is continually sounding the praises of one Baxter," I began. Mr. Stivers, I could see, was wondering why I was so anxious for the introduction.

"She best not place the standard too high," was his reply. "I may not be able to come up to the requirements thereof."

After a few moment's conversation, the gentlemen walked off together. Mr. Baxter saying:

"I trust we will meet again. I come pretty near being a regular here."

Dennie was in the parlor when I got home.

"Suppose I raise \$40," said I. "do you think I could get a bicycle?"

"You could get one if you had \$5. You can get anything on installments in this man's town, from a brown-stone front to a box of marbles."

In half an hour Dennie had selected a wheel in a Ninth street establishment. I had made a deposit thereon, and were en route to the Monument Lot to take our first lesson. Dennie was so strong he actually held me on the machine, but I couldn't keep my feet on the stirrups—pedals, he called them. After the hardest hour's work of my life, I could navigate alone about 15 feet.

"Now, want to teach you how to get off," said Dennie.

"Hadden't I better learn how to get on first?"

"Oh, you can stand it up by the curb and do that easily. Jimmie Michael, the crack rider, says any fool can climb on. It takes an artist to get off—successfully, that's the word."

I told my tutor I thought one more lesson would make me proficient, and we trundled the wheel back to the house. We were at a loss where to stable it.

"I'll fix it," said Dennie. "I'll drive a large nail up behind the front door; you can wrap it with cloth and hang the wheel there."

"You think that it will be safe?"

"How's anybody going to steal it when they don't know it's there?"

On Sunday afternoon, 6 o'clock found me at the dining room. Mr. Stivers soon entered alone.

"I had to put it off until next Sunday. She promised then she'd go. How about that evening I was to have in your society?" he added.

"Suppose we call it the Friday following," said I. "And if you don't have your wife here next Sunday I never will trust another man as long as I live."

Times flies fast when one is at work. Mrs. Edenworth pounded away on the typewriter every night, refusing my proffers of assistance.

"Up the State!" I repeated.

"Yes. Paw says it's always best to hail from up the State. Tom's from up the State somewhere."

"May I ask, who is Tom?"

"Don't you know? Why, Tom Platt, to be sure. And paw is a personal friend of Tom's. Course he hasn't done anything for paw just yet. But, then, paw's working, and the boys, they're in the dump."

"In the what?"

"That's our name for the mail-bag repair shop. 'Taint much right now, but they'll catch on. I need a corset, a knit shawl, and two of these thin, whatyoucall-ems. Don't you